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THE FIFTH SESSION

OF THE

FIRST NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS

1 February - 11 February 1958

April 1958

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I. Introduction

On 6 January 1958, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) announced that the Fifth Session of the Congress would be held in Peking, beginning on 25 January. This announcement was somewhat unexpected since the Fourth Session had been held as recently as 26 June - 15 July 1957, and normally a period of a year had been allowed to elapse between such meetings.

The agenda for the Congress as announced on 6 January included (a) the national economic plan for 1958, (b) the examination and approval of the 1958 budget, and (c) the approval of the alphabetization of the Han language. This agenda made it appear that important economic problems and decisions had required the convening of the Congress in advance of the normal date in order to secure its formal approval.

Recent events in Communist China, however, led some to wonder whether there was not at least one other question which, even though not mentioned in the announced agenda, might engage the attention of the Congress. During the preceding months, a number of provincial congresses had been taking action to dismiss from party and government posts in the provinces rightist elements which had been identified in the course of the "blooming and contending" campaign. It seemed plausible that one reason for the convening of the Fifth Session of the NPC might be to carry the process of punishment and purging of rightists to the national level.

For nearly three weeks after the 6 January announcement no further public mention was made of the forthcoming Fifth Session. Then, on 24 January, a New China News Agency (NCNA) broadcast

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carried an announcement by the Standing Committee that a preparatory meeting for the Fifth Session of the NPC would be convened on 25 January. No explanation was made as to why the opening of the Congress itself, originally announced for the 25th, had been postponed. Prime Minister CHOU En-lai reported the agenda for the Congress which included:

(a) A report on the execution of the 1957 budget.

(b) The draft of the 1958 budget.

(c) The draft of the 1958 national economic plan.

(d) The phonetic alphabet.

(e) A readjustment of organizations under the State Council.

The addition of the fifth item to those originally announced, presaging some reshuffling on the national governmental level, seemed to strengthen the possiblity that the Congress would take some action against rightists in upper-level governmental posts.

On 25 January, NCNA reported the preparatory meeting presided over by LIU Shao-chi. PENG Chen, a vice-chairman of the Standing Committee, member of the Politburo and Mayor of Peking, reported an agenda identical with that announced by CHOU En-lai on the 24th. The formal opening of the Fifth Session of the NPC was scheduled for 1 February. On 31 January, NCNA again announced the opening of the Congress on 1 February and listed an agenda which, without explanation, omitted the item on reorganization of organizations under the State Council.

It is possible to speculate on the meaning of the alternate omission and inclusion of this item in the agenda as indicating indecision or friction within the Chinese Communist leadership over the cabinet shuffle which was to take place.

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000800010015-6

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The Fifth Session of the First National People's Congress got under way, as announced, on 1 February. On the rostrum, listed in this order by NCNA, were Chairman MAO Tse-tung,* Vice Chairman CHU Te, Chairman of the Standing Committee LIU Shao-chi, Prime Minister CHOU En-lai, Vice-Chairmen LI Chi-shen, SHEN Chün-ju, KUO Mo-jo, HUANG Yen-pei, and "others".

The formal agenda for the Congress now included a report by Vice-premier and Finance Minister LI Hsien-nien on the 1957 budget and the draft of the 1958 budget, a report by Vice-premier and chairman of the National Economic Commission PO I-po on the 1958 national economic plan, one by PENG Chen on the work of the Standing Committee and one by WU Yu-chang, Director of the Committee for Reform of the Chinese Written Language, on the proposed phonetic alphabet. Reorganization of the government was again omitted.

II. Removal of Rightists From Ministries

Even before the Congress formally convened, the expected purge of rightists from upper-level government posts began. According to the Chinese Home Service of the Peking radio, the State Council on 31 January, after hearing a report from CHOU En-lai, voted to recommend to the Standing Committee of the NPC the dismissal of three non-CCP ministers who had been named in 1957 as rightists. The three were CHANG Po-chün, Minister of Communications, CHANG Nai-ch'i, Minister of Food, and LO Lung-chi, Minister of Timber Industry. The radio report did not detail the charges against these ministers which were presumably part of CHOU's report, but the dismissals came as no surprise. These three had been among the most outspoken critics of the party and system in the period of "blooming and contending" during the first half of 1957, and had been the principal targets of the anti-rightist campaign thereafter. CHANG Po-chün and LO Lung-chi

* Underlined names are those of Chinese Communist Party Central Committee members.

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000800010015-6

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000800010015-6

had, in varying degrees, repented and confessed while CHANG Nai-ch'i had apparently been somewhat more recalcitrant. Their cases had received a maximum of attention in the Chinese press and over the radio, and it had generally been felt that their removal from office was only a question of time.

The three rightist ministers, non-Communist Party members, had been representatives in the government of the so-called "democratic parties", part of the facade of democracy provided by the Chinese Communists for their government. CHANG Po-chün and LO Lung-chi were Vice-chairmen of the Central Committee of the China Democratic League. CHANG Po-chün was also Chairman of the Central Committee of the Peasant-Worker Democratic Party. CHANG Nai-ch'i was Vice-chairman of the Central Committee of the China Democratic National Construction Association and Vice-chairman of the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce. The democratic parties had been targets for anti-rightist denunciation for their bourgeois ideology, failure to give wholehearted support to the building of socialism and for harboring rightists and counterrevolutionaries in their ranks. In self-defense and as a preliminary to the removal of the three ministers from their government posts, the democratic parties, between the opening of the preparatory meeting on 25 January and the convening of the NPC on 1 February had moved to purify themselves by expelling from office and membership in their parties a number of rightists, including the three ministers. Thus, since they no longer represented these parties, their removal from government office could be justified on constitutional as well as ideological grounds.

The Standing Committee of the NPC confirmed the decision of the State Council and, accordingly, Chairman MAO on 31 January issued a formal decree dismissing the three rightists from their ministerial posts.

III. Purge of Rightist Deputies From the NPC

The first day's session of the NPC on 1 February continued the purging of rightists from the organs of government. Although six-

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teen elected deputies* to the Congress (including SHA Wen-han and YANG Ssu-i, governor and vice-governor, respectively, of Chekiang province until removed not long before by the provincial Congress) had been dismissed as rightists by the Standing Committee prior to the opening of the NPC on the basis of a recommendation by the Fourth Session, a number of rightists still held valid credentials as deputies.** One of the first acts of the NPC was to reject these credentials for thirty-eight rightist deputies. They were charged with having "betrayed the fundamental principles of the Constitution by their anti-communist, anti-people, and anti-socialist positions and attitudes."

Of the thirty-eight rejected deputies, in addition to CHANG Po-chün, CHANG Nai-ch'i and LO Lung-chi, ten were also removed from offices at higher levels. Removed as members of the Standing Committee were HUANG Shao-hung, LUNG Yün and CH'EN Ming-shu; from the Nationalities Committee, FEI Hsiao-t'ung, HUANG Hsien-fang, and OU Pai-ch'uan; and from the Bills Committee, CHANG Yün-ch'uan, HUANG Shao-hung, HUANG Ch'i-hsiang, HSIEH Hsüeh-hung and LO Lung-chi. Two members of this committee had also been among the sixteen deputies dismissed by the Standing Committee before the opening of the Congress. LUNG Yün and HUANG Ch'i-hsiang were also removed from the National Defense Council. The latter two had shortly before been dismissed from their offices and membership in the Kuomintang Revolutionary Committee, one of the "democratic parties". Most of the remainder of the thirty-eight, as well as of the sixteen dismissed in advance, seem to be individuals of lesser importance about whom little is known.

There has been speculation as to a relationship between this purge of the government organs of the Chinese People's Republic

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* For these names and other groups removed from office by the NPC, see Appendix.

** There is no evidence as to whether any of these were in physical attendance at the Congress.

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(CPR) and a possible internal conflict within the Chinese Communist leadership. However, so little information is available either about the purged individuals (with the exception of a few top figures) or about any such internal conflict that no conclusions along these lines can be drawn. There seems to be no reason to assume at present that this purge is anything more than appears on the surface--an elimination of rightist elements identified in the course of the cheng feng campaign.

Only four of the purged deputies have been identified as Communist party members and most of the rest about whom anything is known were members or officers of the democratic parties, including the CDL, the Chinese Peasants and Workers Democratic Party, the Kuomintang Revolutionary Committee, the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce Associations, and the Chiu San Society. It is possible that besides the punishment and elimination of individual rightists, the purge is also intended as an attack upon the democratic parties themselves. The example made of these leaders will discourage the remaining elements of the parties from exhibiting any rightist tendencies in the future and at the same time the parties have been deprived of their most independent-minded leaders and those with sufficient courage to voice their criticisms.

The Communist regime may well feel that this punishment of rightist democratic party elements will ensure a minimum of trouble from these parties in the future. The intention of the CCP to make the democratic parties completely reliable agencies for control of non-Party elements is further indicated by the frequent warnings given by Communist Party leaders that the democratic parties still retain many bourgeois characteristics and that their only future lies in thorough socialist re-education, wholehearted support of socialist construction, and acceptance of the leading role of the Communist Party. The implication is present that should the democratic parties fail to heed these warnings, the regime might decide to dispense with the democratic parties altogether.

The analysis of the backgrounds of the purged deputies, besides indicating an attack upon the democratic parties, also proves once

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000800010015-6

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more how completely insecure is the position in the Communist regime of individuals with a background of Western associations or former KMT membership. The regime uses such persons for the sake of their skills and knowledge or for their prestige value, but never really trusts them and they must walk always in the shadow of the fear that at any moment, at any whim of the party leadership, their past associations may be brought up against them.

The future of the purged rightists is not clear. The regime apparently prefers to avoid the bloody type of purge associated with Stalinism although it will not hesitate to use more drastic measures if necessary. It is likely that many of the exposed rightists will be included in the transfer of intellectuals and bureaucrats back to the countryside. Whether a middle-aged or elderly intellectual will regard a return to the life of a peasant as lenient treatment can perhaps be doubted.

IV. Readjustment of Organizations Under the State Council

Although the agenda announced at the opening of the National People's Congress on 1 February had omitted the item concerning a "readjustment of organizations under the State Council", this subject did in fact come before the Congress on its last day, 11 February. Premier CHOU En-lai recommended to the NPC a reorganization involving both a reshuffle of Ministers and the abolition or merging of several ministries. CHOU explained that this was being done in the "spirit of the rectification campaign and to cope with the new situation now that China's socialist construction had entered the second five-year plan." There is no suggestion that there is any question of rightists here or that anything other than an improvement in efficiency is the aim.

The most spectacular of the personnel changes involved was the relief of CHOU En-lai himself as Foreign Minister and his replacement by CHEN I. While this announcement set off a wave of speculation as to its significance, further consideration has brought most observers to agree that it probably means just what the Chinese

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000800010015-6

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Communists have said it means--that the combined burdens of the premiership and the foreign office were becoming too much for CHOU who is aging and whose health has been reported not of the best. CHEN I is an old associate of CHOU and presumably the latter will remain in control of basic foreign policy while freeing himself of irksome day-to-day responsibilities.

It has been suggested that CHOU desired to free himself for closer attention to internal affairs. This may mean that he desires to devote himself to the solution of the serious economic problems which China faces or, as has been suggested, that he desires to build up his strength in the CCP in order to reinforce his personal position, which now rests more upon his position in the government, in preparation for a power struggle which may develop within the CCP if MAO withdraws from active control.

In addition to CHOU En-lai and the three rightists previously removed, twelve other Ministers were relieved of their posts by the Fifth Session of the NPC. They were:

(a) WANG Hao-shou* (3769/7729/1108). Minister of Metallurgical Industry.

(b) LAI Chi-fa (6351/7139/4099). Minister of Building Material Industry

(c) HUANG Ching** (7806/2417). Minister of 1st Ministry of Machine Building.

(d) CHAO Erh-lu (6392/3643/4389). Minister of 2nd Ministry of Machine Building.

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* Underlining indicates Chinese Communist Party membership.

** HUANG Ching died in Canton on 10 February 1958 of natural causes, according to an NCNA announcement on 12 February.

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Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000800010015-6

(e) LIU Lan-po (0491/3482/3134). Minister of Electric Power Industry.

(f) LI Chü-k'uei (2621/5112/1145). Minister of Petroleum Industry.

(g) WAN Li (5502/6849). Minister of City Construction.

(h) SHA Ch'ien-li* (3097/0578/6849). Minister of Light Industry.

(i) LI Chu-ch'en (2621/3608/1057). Minister of Food Industry.

(j) FU Tso-i (0265/0155/5030). Minister of Water Conservancy.

(k) YANG Hsiu-feng (2799/4423/1496). Minister of Higher Education.

(l) CHANG Hsi-jo (1728/1153/5387). Minister of Education.

Concurrently with these dismissals, several of the Ministries were abolished or merged with others in a reorganization aimed at greater efficiency. Appointed to head the reorganized Ministries were several of the individuals previously relieved of their former posts plus some new appointments. Heads of the reorganized Ministries were in most cases individuals previously holding Ministerial positions, with one new appointment.

(a) The National Construction Commission, headed by WANG Hao-shou (3769/7729/1108), was abolished and its functions distributed among several other agencies. WANG, one of the regime's top economic

* SHA Ch'ien-li is not officially a member of the Chinese Communist Party, but has been reported as a secret Party member.

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000800010015-6

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experts, presumably continues to hold the post of Minister of Metallurgical Industry.

(b) The Ministry of Commerce was renamed the First Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of City Services became the Second Ministry of Commerce.

YANG I-ch'en (2799/0061/6591), former Minister of City Services, was appointed as Minister of the Second Ministry of Commerce.

(c) The First Ministry of Machine Building (CHAO Erh-lu), the Second Ministry of Machine Building (HUANG Ching, deceased), and the Ministry of Power Equipment (formerly headed by CHANG Lin-chih*) were merged into the First Ministry of Machine Building and the Third Ministry of Machine Building became the Second Ministry.

CHAO Erh-lu was appointed Minister of the new First Ministry of Machine Building.

(d) The Ministry of Electric Power and the Ministry of Water Conservancy were merged under the latter title.

FU Tso-i was reappointed to head the new Ministry, while LIU Lan-po, former Minister of Electric Power, was left jobless.

(e) The Ministry of Building Material Industry (LAI Chi-fa) and the Ministry of City Construction (WAN Li) were combined as the Ministry of Construction and Engineering. **

* CHANG Lin-chih was not named as having been relieved of this post, and what his status is following the abolition of this Ministry is not known, but he is apparently still Minister of Coal Industry.

** No announcement was made as to the head of this new Ministry.

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000800010015-6

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(f) The Foreign Cultural Liaison Bureau, formerly a special agency of the State Council, was elevated to become the Foreign Cultural Liaison Commission.

CHANG Hsi-jo, formerly Minister of Education, was appointed as its director. This special agency had been functioning under a deputy director.

(g) The Ministry of Higher Education was absorbed by the Ministry of Education.

YANG Hsiu-feng, former Minister of Higher Education, was appointed Minister of Education.

(h) The Ministry of Food Industry was absorbed into the Ministry of Light Industry.

LI Chu-ch'en, former Minister of Food Industry, was appointed Minister of Light Industry to replace SHA Ch'ien-li.

(i) SHA Ch'ien-li was appointed Minister of Food, a post formerly held by rightist CHANG Nai-chi.

(j) YU Chien-li* replaced LI Chü-k'uei as Minister of Petroleum Industry.

(k) The Ministry of Timber Industry, formerly headed by rightist LO Lung-chi, was merged into the Ministry of Forestry under LIANG Hsi.

(l) WANG Shou-tao (3769/7445/6670), Director of the Sixth Staff Office (Transport and Communications), was appointed Minister of Communications, a post formerly held by rightist CHANG Po-chün.

* This is YU's first governmental post. His previous career was in the army. Prior to his appointment he was political commissar of the General Rear Services Department of the PLA.

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000800010015-6

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The announced purpose of this reorganization and reshuffle of personnel was to improve the efficiency of the government, particularly in the economic field, as the country's economy enters its second five-year plan. Analysis of the changes strongly indicates that this was, in fact, the major motive behind the reorganization. The titles of the Ministries involved in the readjustment indicate that the Chinese Communist bureaucracy had developed in the course of its rapid growth a good deal of overlapping and duplication of functions. As CHOU En-lai pointed out, the State Council, which began with 35 Ministries and Commissions in October 1954, had grown to 48 in January of 1958. It is not at all surprising that after such a period of growth some streamlining was found to be necessary.

Most of the reorganization of the ministries themselves involved the consolidation of agencies with related or overlapping functions, thus eliminating some duplication and providing a more rational allocation of authority and responsibility. The merger of Timber Industry with Forestry, of Higher Education with Education, and of the Building Material Industry with City Construction are examples of this rationalization.

There are indications that some of the personnel changes were also intended to promote efficiency by removing some Ministers who had perhaps not achieved all that was expected of them in their departments. The four former Ministers who were not reappointed were all men without known qualifications in the technological, industrial fields for which their ministries were responsible. Their appointments to these posts seem to have been based rather on their Party status. It is possible that the Chinese Communists have found that Party reliability does not always make for administrative and economic efficiency. On the other hand several of the retained Ministers are also Party men without known academic or technical qualifications. Without more information concerning the personal capabilities and achievements in office of these men, it is impossible to state positively that the dismissals were the result of failures on the part of the

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individuals concerned. However, the absence of any derogatory comments on them in the announcement of the dismissals, which would surely have been included had any question of loyalty or ideological purity been involved, seems to indicate that an improvement in efficiency was the real aim. There is, however, no indication that any Ministry was abolished simply as a means of getting rid of an incompetent Minister.

Another question which must also be considered is whether the Chinese Communists, following the Russian example, were carrying out a reorganization for the purpose of strengthening Communist Party control over the government machinery. While there are indications of such an intention in some Chinese Communist policies, such as the strengthening of the system of political officers in the army and the attack upon the democratic parties in the anti-rightist campaign, this purpose does not seem to be solely involved in the reorganization announced at the recent NPC session. All of the ministers who failed to receive reappointments are Communist Party members, most of them of long standing. None of them have been involved in the anti-rightist campaign. On the other hand, three who were retained in office are not believed to be Party members. The lone indication of a strengthening of Party control may be the transfer of a non-Communist Minister of Education to a less sensitive post in the Foreign Cultural Liaison Commission and his replacement by a Communist Party member. It is impossible to say, of course, whether these announced changes at the top level are to be accompanied by unannounced changes at the second level which are intended to ensure unquestioned Party control.

V. Foreign Policy

On 10 February 1958, CHOU En-lai, Premier and still Foreign Minister, delivered his report on foreign affairs to the National People's Congress (NPC). After beginning with a brief reference to the successful rectification campaign, he devoted a large part of his time to a recapitulation of events in international relations in the six months since the last session of the NPC. They were

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reviewed, of course, in familiar Communist terms and described as a series of triumphs for Communist China and the socialist world. The Hungarian crisis, the Suez war, the manufactured Syrian crisis, Malayan independence, the Pathet Lao/Royal Laotian Government agreements, the Indonesia disturbance, and many other incidents were all reviewed as illustrating how the forces of peace and socialism have defeated the forces of imperialism and war. He quoted MAO Tse-tung's statement that "it is not the west wind which prevails over the east wind, but the east wind which prevails over the west wind." This part of his speech was, of course, as expected and could have been written for him by almost any student of Communism. There were, however, some other parts dealing with matters involving Communist China's future policies in which his remarks were more interesting.

He laid stress on the fact that the military superiority of the West had disappeared and that the socialist world was fast catching up in other fields of science and technology, noting the successful launching of two sputniks by the Soviet Union as further evidence of this. Quoting the announced intention of the Soviet Union to surpass the United States in production within fifteen years, he restated the Chinese purpose of catching up with Britain in steel production in the same period.

From this assumption that the United States now faces its international problems from a position of inferiority, CHOU proceeded to point out divisions and weaknesses in the capitalist camp. Noting that the West, and particularly the United States, was suffering from a serious economic recession, he argued that the US was endeavoring to use its dominant position to shift the burden of this recession to its allies. He devoted some time to depicting the "contradictions" which he said had appeared among the Western powers at the recent NATO meeting.

In contrast to the weakness of the United States and its reliance on threats of war to solve its economic problems, CHOU pointed to the "peace proposals" of the Soviet Union for a summit conference

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to solve world problems, and gave the proposals Communist China's wholehearted endorsement. This, plus the support which CHOU gave to Egypt's suggestion that she (Egypt) be invited to a summit conference, suggests to many that Communist China is maneuvering in an attempt to become a participant in such a conference.

In connection with his support of Russian policies, CHOU made a statement of basic Chinese Communist foreign policy which is worth attention, even though it has been stated before. "Our country," he said, "is a member of the socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union. To enhance the strength and solidarity of this camp is our primary international obligation. . . ."

CHOU's report also devoted some attention to the Korean question. After reviewing recent Korean history in familiar Communist terms--the US aggression, the unselfish intervention of the Chinese People's Volunteers, the US determination to keep Korea divided and use it as a military base, etc., he advanced proposals concerning Korea which contained two new ideas. From the familiar statement that Korean unification was a matter for the Koreans themselves without foreign intervention, he argued that withdrawal of all foreign troops must come first. Then the future of Korea should be determined by free nationwide elections held under the supervision of an organization of neutral nations (not the UN). This is the first official statement from the Chinese Communists of support for neutral supervision of elections in Korea, even though it would probably be discovered in the implementation of this proposal that their concept of "neutrals" in this context would be quite different from that of non-Communist nations.

To facilitate such a solution, CHOU continued, the Chinese People's Republic was prepared to discuss with the North Korean government the withdrawal of the People's Volunteers from Korea. *

* It has, of course, since been announced by the CPR that this unilateral withdrawal will be completed by the end of 1958.

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He urged that the United States and the United Nations do likewise, but did not make Chinese withdrawal contingent upon this.

Then CHOU turned to the question of relations between Communist China and the United States. After referring to the protracted ambassadorial talks which have been going on and blaming their failure on the US insistence upon recognition of the status quo for Taiwan, he proceeded to consider further the question of Taiwan and the Chiang Kai-shek government. The importance which the Chinese Communists place on this question is indicated by the fact that CHOU devoted approximately one-fourth of his whole report to the subject. He reviewed the attempts of the United States to promote the "two-China" concept--the Eleventh Olympic Games, the meeting of the Special Committee on the International Geophysical Year, the International Red Cross Conference in New Delhi in October 1957, etc. He criticized both the British and the Japanese for the support which he alleged they have given to the two-China concept. He reiterated again and again in the strongest terms the determination of Communist China never to accept the idea of two Chinas. In closing, he made it plain that Communist China was not interested in any deal exchanging US recognition of the Communist regime for Communist acceptance of the two-China idea.

VI. Other Reports to the NPC

A. Economic Affairs

On 3 February, the NPC heard reports from Finance Minister LI Hsien-nien on the budget and from Chairman of the National Economic Commission PO I-po on the National Economic Plan for 1958. It is not the purpose of this paper to attempt any sort of an analysis of the Chinese Communist economy based upon these reports. The generalized figures and statistics provided would not lend themselves to such an analysis in any case. However, there are a few implications in these reports which should be mentioned.

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000800010015-6

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None of the economic problems which Communist China is believed to be currently facing--such as lagging agricultural production, largescale movement of peasants to the cities with consequent manpower shortages on the land, shortage of consumer goods, particularly food-grains and cotton cloth, etc.--were admitted or dealt with in these economic and fiscal reports. LI Hsien-nien did admit that in the winter of 1956 there had been some overspending on capital construction. Of course, the Central Committee and MAO Tse-tung had corrected this error. The very general figures given in the draft budget for 1958 indicate that while a slight increase is planned for capital investment in agriculture, the principal emphasis will still be placed upon heavy industry. The total budget represents an increase of approximately three billion yuan over 1957.

PO I-po's report also acknowledged the role of assistance from "the Soviet Union and other fraternal countries" in the accomplishment of the first five-year plan and assured the Congress that "generous help" would continue to be forthcoming from the same sources. However, there is also throughout the report, as in other reports and speeches, a strong emphasis upon "practice economy and oppose waste", and repeated admonitions that only extreme frugality can make possible the fulfillment of the plan. The budget for 1958, as reported by LI Hsien-nien, does not include any figures for foreign aid in its tabulation of expected revenue, although such aid may be hidden in receipts from "foreign trade", "loans", or "other sources". Similarly, on the expenditure side no specific figure for repayment of foreign loans is given, although the total for repayment of loans of all kinds is 3.12 percent of the total budget, an increase of 123.01 percent over the 1957 figure.

In this connection it is interesting to compare the silence of the budget on foreign aid and the emphasis throughout the Congress on preventing waste with a Peking Daily editorial published on 2 February. The paper was explaining why there were not sufficient funds available for all development projects, thus necessitating the practice of economy and the prevention of waste. It pointed out that

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000800010015-6

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China had received loans in the past from the Soviet Union and other fraternal countries but that those countries needed funds themselves for their own construction and, therefore, China could not one-sidedly rely on them to help her. In the future ". . . dependence should be placed on the 600 million people of our country for the accumulation of every cent" (emphasis added).

In the light of statements such as these, it is possible to question whether PO I-po's statement about "generous help" in the 1958 plan was entirely candid.

B. Rectification

The progress of the rectification campaign and the anti-rightist movement was not part of the agenda of the NPC. Perhaps it was felt that the report on the cheng feng movement delivered by TENG Hsiao-p'ing to the plenary session of the Central Committee of the CCP on 23 September 1957 had adequately dealt with this question.

Nevertheless, most of the speakers found it desirable to include a reference to rectification in their remarks. CHOU's report on foreign affairs began with a tribute to the campaign/as having "infused an unprecedented new spirit" into the Chinese people. PO I-po credited rectification with having won "great victories on the political and ideological fronts" which in turn "spurred on victory on the economic front". The rectification campaign and the anti-rightist struggle, he went on, "constitute a socialist revolution on the political and ideological fronts and a continuation of the socialist revolution that took place in 1955-56 on the economic front." PO also laid emphasis on the importance of practicing economy and opposing waste if economic goals were to be met.

Such references to the success of rectification and anti-rightism could be multiplied from the speeches of the deputies at the NPC who seemed to feel that their own ideological purity required such statements crediting the campaigns with the successes and achievements in all fields.

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One aspect of rectification, the transfer of something like a million cadres, bureaucrats, students and intellectuals back to the land for physical labor, received little attention at the Congress. An occasional deputy supported the policy in a speech, but no important leader made any significant statement on this problem.

C. Minorities

The principal statement on this question was made by WANG Feng, vice-chairman of the Commission of Nationalities Affairs. His report to the Congress discussed the question of localism as a barrier to national unity and a hindrance to strengthening "the socialist system and leadership of the party in the national minority areas." He associated localism with rightism, saying "advocates of localism are bourgeois rightists under the cloak of nationalism. The contradictions between us are contradictions between friend and foe." Chinese Communist policy towards the minorities was clearly stated by WANG. "The Chinese Communist Party is the nucleus of leadership in the building of socialism in our country and the true representative and protector of the interests of our various nationalities. All nationalities must sincerely and truly uphold the leadership of the Party."

Speeches were also made by a number of deputies from minority areas, but their remarks were largely confined to describing how fine everything is in their areas, how happy the people are, and the great things they are achieving under the leadership of the Communist Party.

There were implications for the minorities in the approval by the NPC of the proposal for a new alphabet for the written Chinese language. This proposal was undoubtedly motivated by the necessity for a simpler system of writing to facilitate the elimination of illiteracy, both among the minorities and the mass of the Chinese themselves. However, the imposition of written Chinese on the minorities instead of the development of a written form of their own tongue might be regarded as a step towards assimilation of the

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minorities. That such suspicions did actually exist is indicated by the fact that WU Yu-chang, Director of the Committee for the Reform of the Chinese Written Language, reporting to the Congress on the proposal, found it necessary, after pointing out that since the nation had realized national unity, it required a common language, to reiterate that "promotion of the common language should not and will not limit the right of the various nationalities to use and develop their own languages." Whether such statements will actually allay such suspicions among the minorities is something which is open to doubt.

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APPENDIX

THE FIFTH SESSION

OF THE

FIRST NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS

1 February - 11 February 1958

(Not for liaison exchange purposes)

April 1958

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Next 16 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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